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*From the Office of Secretary of the State Susan Bysiewicz*

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## **SECRETARY BYSIEWICZ DEMONSTRATES NEW VOTING TECHNOLOGY FOR MIDDLETOWN-AREA OFFICIALS**

*Visits Middletown to show how new optical scan machines work, answer questions of area elections officials*

**MIDDLETOWN-** Secretary of the State Susan Bysiewicz today demonstrated new optical scan voting technology for local election officials at Middletown City Hall, showing officials from Middletown and surrounding towns the type of voting machines that will serve as replacements for all of Connecticut's lever voting machines by 2007.

Optical scan voting technology, in which a voter fills out a paper ballot and then scans it into a machine for verification, is the most common form of voting technology in America today, with more than half of the counties nationwide voting on optical scan machines. Optical scan technology also provides a paper trail for every vote cast, in compliance with state law and the federal Help America Vote Act.

Today's visit to Middletown is the seventeenth of twenty scheduled regional visits throughout Connecticut to meet with local elections officials, demonstrate the new technology for them, and answer any questions they may have, Secretary Bysiewicz said. Twenty-five (25) cities and towns in Connecticut will begin using the optical scan machines this year, including Middletown and Durham. The rest of the state will begin using them in 2007.

"As our office considered potential new technologies, the principles of security, accessibility and reliability guided our decision making. We chose optical scan technology because it provides a level of security needed to ensure the short-term and long-term integrity of our elections," Secretary Bysiewicz. "People will find optical scan paper ballots very familiar; they are very similar to filling out a standardized test or even a lottery ticket, and many who have seen and used these machines now are impressed with their security and simplicity."

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"Federal funds will cover the \$15.7 million cost of purchasing the new machines and providing the proper training for elections officials," Secretary Bysiewicz added. "We will work closely with Registrars and Town Clerks to ensure that people receive the education and on-the-job training they need."

Middletown and Durham were selected as two of the twenty-five towns to begin using optical scan technology this year. The towns will receive optical scan machines and privacy booths, paid for with federal funds.

<b>Town</b>	<b>Registered Voters</b>	<b>Polling Places</b>	<b>Optical Scan Machines</b>	<b>Privacy Booths</b>
Durham	4,900	2	5	20
Middletown	24,000	14	29	96

Sandra Russo, Town Clerk of Middletown and President of the Connecticut Town Clerk's Association, said, "Middletown is very happy to have been chosen as one of the towns to introduce this new voting technology this year. Our residents are very excited to be taking part, and we will have a very successful election."

Janice Gionfriddo, Republican Registrar of Voters in Middletown, said, "These are demonstrations that they are doing all over the state. This definitely will be helpful to us, particularly to our inside people such as the moderators, mechanics, and poll workers who will be working with the machines on Election Day."

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